P-1278

Englands Great Intereſt
IN THE
Choice of this New Parliament.
Dedicated to all her Free-holders and Electors.

SInce it hath pleaſed *God* and the *King* to begin to revive and reſtore to us our Ancient Right of *frequent Parliaments*, it will greatly concern us, as to our preſent Intereſt, and therein the future Happineſs of our Poſterity, to act at this time with all the *Wiſdom*, *Caution* and *Integrity* we can. For beſides, that 'tis our own Buſineſs, and that if by a neglect of this ſingular Opportunity we deſert our ſelves, and forſake our own Mercies, we muſt expect to be *Left of God and good Men too*. It may be there has never happened, not only in the memory of the living, but in the Records of the dead, *ſo odd and ſo ſtrange a Conjuncture as this we are under*: It is made up of ſo many uſeful and important Circumſtances (all affecting us to the very Heart) that whether we regard the long ſitting of the late *Parliament*, or its abrupt and unexpected *Diſſolution*, or the *Prorogation* of the laſt and its ſurpriſing *Diſſolution*, or the ſtrong Jealouſies of the People, and that univerſal agitation, that is now upon the ſpirit of the Nation, and the Reaſons and Motives thereof (ſo far as we can reach them) *there ſeems never to have been a time, wherein this Kingdom ought to ſhow it ſelf more ſerious and diligent in the buſineſs of its own ſafety.*

To be plain with you, *All is at Stake*: and therefore I muſt tell you, That the Work of this Parliament is,

Firſt, To purſue the Diſcovery and Puniſhment of the *Plot*: for that has been the old *Snake in the Graſs*, the *Trojan Horſe*, with an Army in the Belly of it.

Secondly, To remove and bring to Juſtice thoſe Evil Counſellors, and Corrupt and *Arbitrary Miniſters of State*, that have been ſo Induſtrious to give the King *Wrong Meaſures*, to turn Things out of their Ancient and Legal Channel of Adminiſtration, and Alienate his Affections from his People.

Thirdly, To Detect and Puniſh the *Penſioners* of the former *Parliament*, in the Face of the Kingdom.

Fourthly, To ſecure to us the Execution of our *Ancient Laws*, by New ones, and among the reſt ſuch as relate to *frequent Parliaments*, the only true Check upon *Arbitrary Miniſters*, and therefore feared, hated and oppoſed by them.

Fifthly, That we be ſecur'd from *Popery* and Slavery; and that *Proteſtant-Diſſenters* be eaſed.

Sixthly, That in caſe this be done, the King be releaſed from his burdenſom *Debts* to the Nation, and eas'd in the buſineſs of his Revenue. And let me be free with you, if you intend to ſave poor *England*, You muſt take this General Meaſure, *viz.* To guide and fix your Choice upon Men, that you have reaſon to believe are *Well-affected*, *Able* and *Bold* to ſerve the Country in theſe Reſpects.

The Words of the *Writ* (at leaſt, the *Import* of them) is, *To chuſe Wiſe men, fearing God, and hating Covetouſneſs*; and what to do? Says the ſame *Writ*, *To Adviſe the King of the Weighty Matters of the Kingdom.* Let us not then play the Fools or Knaves, to Neglect or Betray the *Common Intereſt* of our Country, by a *Baſe Election*: Let neither Fear, Flattery, nor Gain *Byaſs* us. We muſt not make our *Publick Choice*, the Recompence of *Private Favours* from our Neighbours; they muſt excuſe us for that: the Weight of the Matter will ver well bear it. This is our Inheritance; all depends upon it: Men don't uſe to lend their Wives, or give their Children to ſatisfie *Perſonal Kindneſſes*; nor muſt we make a *Sweep* of our *Birth-right* (and that of our Poſterities too) for a Meſs of Pottage, a *Feaſt* or a *Drinking bout*; there can be no Proportion here: and therefore none muſt take it Ill, that we uſe our Freedom about that, which in its Conſtitution is the Great Bulwark of all our *Ancient Li-*

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liſh Liberties. Truly, our not conſidering what it is to chuſe a *Parliament*, and how much all is upon the Hazard in it, may at laſt *Loſe us fatally* by our own Choice. For I muſt needs tell you, If we Miſcarry, it will be our own *Fault*; we have no Body elſe to blame: For ſuch is the Happineſs of our Conſtitution, That we cannot well be deſtroy'd, but by our ſelves: and what Man in his Wits would Sacrifice his Throat to his own hands?

We, the *Commons of England*, are a great part of the Fundamental Government of it, and *Three Rights* are ſo peculiar and inherent to us, that if we will not throw them away for *Fear* or *Favour*, for *Meat* and *Drink*, or thoſe other little preſent profits, that *Ill Men* offer to tempt us with, they cannot be altered or abrogated. And this I was willing to give you a brief hint of, that you may know, *what Sort of Creatures you are, and what your Power is*, leſt through Ignorance of your own Strength and Authority, you turn Slaves to the Humors of thoſe, that properly and truly are but your *Servants*, and ought to be uſed ſo.

The *Firſt* of theſe three Fundamentals is *Property*, that is, *Right and Title to your own Lives, Liberties and Eſtates*: in this every man is a ſort of little *Soveraign* to himſelf: No man has power over his *Perſon* to Impriſon or Hurt it, or over his *Eſtate* to Invade or Uſurp it: only your own Tranſgreſſion of the Laws, (and thoſe of your own making too) lays you open to Loſs; *which is but the Puniſhment due for your Offences*, and this but in Proportion to the Fault committed. So that the Power of *England* is a *Legal* Power, which truly merits the Name of *Government*: that which is not Legal, is a *Tyranny*, and not properly a *Government*. Now the Law is Umpire between King, Lords and Commons, and the *Right* and *Property* is *One in kind through all Degrees and Qualities in the Kingdom*. Mark that.

We ſee it daily in *Weſtminſter-hall*, as well in Parliamentary Tranſactions.

The *Second* Fundamental, that is your *Birth-right* and *Inheritance*, is *Legiſlation*, or the Power of making Laws; *No Law can be made or abrogated in* England *without you*. Before *Henry* the *Third*'s Time, your *Anceſtors*, the *Free-men* of *England*, met in their own Perſons, but their Numbers much increaſing, the Vaſtneſs of them, and the Confuſion that muſt needs attend them, making ſuch Aſſemblies not practicable for Buſineſs, this way of *Repreſentatives* was firſt pitch'd upon as an Expedient, both to maintain the *Commons Right*, and to avoid the Confuſion of thoſe mighty Numbers. So that now, as well as then, *No Law can be made, no Money levied, nor not a Penny legally demanded*, (even to defray the Charges of the Government) *without your own Conſent*: then which, tell me, what can be freer, or what more ſecure to any People?

Your *Third* Great Fundamental Right and Priviledge is *Executive*, and holds proportion with the other two, in order to compleat both your *Freedom* and *Security*, and that is *Your ſhare in the Judicatory Power, in the Execution and Application of thoſe Laws that you agree to be made*. Inſomuch as *No man according to the ancient Laws of this Realm, can be adjudg'd in matter either of* Life, Liberty, *or* Eſtate, *but it muſt be by the Judgment of his* Peers, *that is, Twelve men of the Neighbourhood, commonly called a* JURY; though this hath been infringed by two *Acts* made in the late long *Parliament*, one againſt the *Quakers* in Particular, and the other againſt *Diſſenters* in General, called *An Act againſt Seditious Conventicles*, where perſons are adjudged Offenders and puniſhable without a *Jury*; which 'tis hoped, this enſuing *Parliament* will think fit in their Wiſdoms to repeal, though with leſs Severity, then one of the ſame Nature (*as to puniſhing men without Juries*) was by *Henry* the Eighth, who for executing of it, hang'd *Empſon* and *Dudley*.

Conſider with your ſelves, that there is nothing more your Intereſt, then for you to underſtand your *Right* in the *Government*, and to be conſtantly Jealous over it; for your Well-being depends upon its Preſervation.

In all Ages there have been *Ill Men*, and we to be ſure are not without them now, ſuch as being conſcious to themſelves of ill things, and dare not ſtand a *Parliament*, would put a *Final Diſſolution* upon the very Conſtitution it ſelf to be ſafe, that ſo we might never ſee another.

But this being a Task too hard to compaſs, their next Expedient is *to make them for their Turn*, by *directing* and *governing* the *Elections*; and herein they are very Artificial, and too often ſucceſsful: which indeed is worſe for us then if we had none. For thus the Conſtitutions of *Parliaments* may be deſtroy'd by *Parliament*, and we who by Law are *Free*, may hereby come to be made *Slaves* by Law. If then you are *Free, and reſolve to be ſo*, if you have any regard to God's Providence in giving you a claim to ſo *excellent a Conſtitution*, if you would not void your own *Rights*, nor lay a Foundation of *Vaſſallage*, to your *unborn Followers, the poor Poſterity of your Loins*, for whom God and Nature, and the Conſtitution of the *Government* have made you *Truſtees*, then ſeriouſly weigh theſe following *Particulars*.

1. In

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I. In your present Election *Receive no man's Gift or Bribe to chuse him*; but be assured, that *he will be false to you, that basely tempts you to be false to your Country, your self and your Children.* How can you hope to see God with peace, that turn *Mercenaries* in a matter, on which depends the *Well-being* of an whole Kingdom for present and future times? since at a pinch *One good Man gains a Vote and saves a Kingdom*; and what does any *County* or *Burgess-Town* in *England* know, but all may depend upon their making a good *Choice?* But then to sell the Providence of God, and the dear-bought purchase of your painful Ancestors for a little *Money* (that after you have got it, *you know not how little a while you may be suffered to keep it*) is the mark of a *Wretched Mind:* Truly such ought not to have the power of a *Free-man*, that would so abuse his own, and hazard other mens Freedom by it: he deserves to be cast over Board, that would *Sink the Vessel*, and thereby drown the Company.

Honest Gentlemen will think they give enough for the Choice, that pay their *Electors* in a constant, painful and chargeable Attendance; but *Such as give Money to be chosen, would get Money by being chosen*, they design *not to serve you, but themselves of you*; and then *fare you well.* As you will answer it to Almighty God, I entreat you to shew your Abhorrence of this Infamous Practice: It renders the very Constitution contemptible, that any should say, *I can be chosen, if I will spend Money, or give them Drink enough*; and this is said not without reason, *Elections*, that ought to be serious things, and gravely and reasonably perform'd, being generally made the occasions of more Rudeness and Drunkenness, then any of the Wild *May-games* in use among us.

Thus by making men *Law-breakers*, they are it seems made fit to chuse *Law-makers*, their *Choice being the purchase of Excess.* But must we always owe our Parliaments to *Rioting* and *Drunkenness?* and must men be made *Uncapable* of all Choice, before they chuse their *Legislators?* I would know of any of you all, if in a difference about a private property, an *Horse* or a *Cow*, or any other thing, you would be as easie, indifferent and careless in chusing your *Arbitrators?* Certainly you would not; with what reason then can you be unconcern'd in the Qualifications of men, upon whose fitness and *Integrity* depends all you and your Posterity may enjoy? Which leads me to the other *Particulars.*

II. Chuse no Man that has been a Reputed *Pensioner*; 'tis not only against your *Interest*, but it is disgraceful to you and the *Parliament* you chuse. The *Representative* of a Nation ought to consist of the most Wise, Sober and Valiant of the People, not Men of mean Spirits or sordid *Passions*, that would sell the *Interest* of the People that chuse them, to advance their own, or be at the Beck of some great Man, in hopes of a *List* to a good Employ: pray beware of these. You need not be streightned, the *Country* is wide and the *Gentry* numerous.

III. By no means chuse a Man that is an *Officer* at Court, or whose Employment is *durante beneplacito*, that is, *at Will and Pleasure*; nor is this any Reflection upon the King, who being one Part of the Government, should leave the other free, and without any the least awe or influence to bar or hinder its proceedings. Besides, an *Officer* is under a Temptation to be *byast*; and to say true, an *Office* to a *Parliament* man, is but a softer and safer word for a *Pension*: the Pretence it has above the other, is the danger of it.

IV. In the next place, Chuse no *Indigent Persons*, for those may be under a temptation of abusing their Trust to gain their own ends: for such do not *Prefer you*, which should be the end of their Choice, but *Raise themselves* by you.

V. Have a care of *Ambitious men* and *non-Residents*, such as live about Town and not with their Estates, who seek honours and preferments above, and little or never embetter the Country with their *Expences* or *Hospitality*, for they intend *themselves* and not the Advantage of the *Country*.

VI. Chuse no *Prodigal* or *Voluptuous Persons*, for besides that they are not Regular enough to be *Law-makers*, they are commonly *Idle*; and though they may wish well to your *Interest*, yet they will lose it rather then their Pleasures; they will scarcely give their *Attendance*, they must not be relied on. So that such Persons are only to be preferred before those that are *Sober to do mischief*; whose debauchery is of the mind; men of *Injust Mercimony and sinister Principles*, who, the soberer they be to themselves, the *worse they are to you.*

VII. Review the *Members* of the last *Parliaments*, and their Inclinations and Votes, as near as you can learn them, and the Conversation of the Gentlemen of your own Country, that were not Members, and take your measures of both, by that which is your *True and Just Interest* at this Critical time of the day, and you need not be divided or distracted in your Choice.

VIII. Rather take a *Stranger*, if recommended by an unquestionable Hand, than a Neighbour *Ill-affected* to your *Interest*. 'Tis not pleasing a Neighbour, because rich and powerful, but *Saving England*, that you are to eye: Neither pay you private Obligations at the cost of the Nation; let not such Engagements put you upon dangerous *Elections*, as you love your Country.

IX. Be

IX. Be ſure to have your Eye upon *Men of Induſtry* and *Improvement*. For thoſe that are Ingenuous and Laborious to propagate the Growth of the Country, will be very tender of weakening or impoveriſhing it: you may truſt ſuch.

X. Let not your Choice be flung upon *Men of Fearful Diſpoſitions*, that will let *good Senſe*, *Truth* and your *real Intereſt* in any point ſink, rather than diſpleaſe ſome one or other great Man. If you are but ſenſible of your *own Real Great Power*, you will wiſely chuſe thoſe, that will by all juſt and legal ways keep and promote it.

XI. Pray ſee, that you chuſe *Sincere Proteſtants*; men that don't play the *Proteſtant in Deſign*, and are indeed *Diſguis'd Papiſts*, ready to pull off their Mask, when time ſerves: You will know ſuch by their *Laughing at the Plot*, *Diſgracing the Evidence*, *Admiring the Traytors Conſtancy*, that were forc'd to it, or their Religion and Party were gone beyond an *Excuſe* or an *Equivocation*. The contrary are men that thank God for this Diſcovery, and in their Converſation zealouſly direct themſelves in an Oppoſition to the *Papal Intereſt*, which indeed is a Combination againſt good *Senſe*, *Reaſon* and *Conſcience*, and to introduce a blind Obedience without (if not againſt) Conviction. And that Principle which introduces Implicit Faith and Blind Obedience in *Religion*, will alſo introduce Implicit Faith and Blind Obedience in *Government*: ſo that it is no more the Law in the one than in the other, but the *Will* and *Power* of the *Superior*, that ſhall be the Rule and Bond of our *Subjection*. This is that fatal Miſchief *Popery* brings with it to *Civil Society*, and for which ſuch Societies ought to be ware of it, and all thoſe that are Friends to it.

XII. *Laſtly*, Among theſe be ſure to find out and caſt your favour upon *Men of large Principles*, ſuch, as will not ſacrifice his Neighbour's *Property* to the frowardneſs of his own *Party* in Religion: *Pick out ſuch men, as will Inviolably maintain Civil Rights for all that will live ſoberly and civilly under the Government.*

Chriſt did not *revile* thoſe that *reviled* him, much leſs did he *perſecute* thoſe, that did not *revile* him; he rebuk't his Diſciples, that would have deſtroyed thoſe that did not follow and conform to them, ſaying; *Ye know not what Spirit ye are of; I came not to deſtroy mens Lives, but to ſave them.* Which made the Apoſtle to ſay, that the *Weapons* of their Warfare were *not Carnal, but Spiritual.* This was the Ancient *Proteſtant* Principle; and where *Proteſtants* perſecute for Religion, *they are falſe to their own profeſſion*, and *Turn* Papiſts *even in the worſt ſenſe*, againſt whom their Anceſtors did ſo ſtoutly exclaim: Read the *Books of Martyrs* of all Countries in *Europe*, and you will find I ſay true: Therefore *beware alſo of that Popery.* Conſider, that ſuch Partial men don't love *England*, but a *Sect*; and prefer *Impoſed Uniformity* before *Virtuous* and *Neighbourly Unity.* This is that Diſturber of Kingdoms and States, and till the *Good Man*, and not the *Opinionative Man* be the Chriſtian in the Eye of the Government, to be ſure, while force is uſed to propagate or deſtroy *Faith*, and *the outward Comforts of the Widow and Fatherleſs are made a Forfeit for the peaceable Exerciſe of their Conſciences to God*, he that ſits in Heaven and judgeth Righteouſly, whoſe Eye pities the Oppreſſed and Poor of the Earth, will withhold his Bleſſings from us.

O lay to heart the grievous *Spoils* and *Ruins* that have been made upon your harmleſs Neighbours for near theſe twenty years, who have only deſired to enjoy their Conſciences to God according to the beſt of their underſtandings, and to eat the Bread of honeſt Labour, and to have but a *Penny* for a *Penny's worth* among you. Whoſe *Ox* or *Aſs* have they taken? whom have they wronged? or when did any of them offer you Violence? yet *Sixty pounds has been diſtrained for* twelve, two hundred pounds *for* ſixty pounds. *The Flocks been taken out of the Fold, the Herd from the Stall; not a Cow left to give Milk to the Orphans, nor a Bed for the Widow to lie on, whole Barns of Corn ſwept away, and not a penny return'd*; and thus bitterly proſecuted moſtly by Laws made againſt *Papiſts.* And what is all this for? unleſs *their worſhipping of God according to their Conſcience*; for they injure no man, nor have they offered the leaſt Moleſtation to the *Government.*

Truly, I muſt take liberty to tell you, If you will not endeavour to redreſs theſe Evils in your Choice, I fear, God will ſuffer you to fall into great Calamity by thoſe you hate. You are afraid of *Popery*, and yet many of you practiſe it: for why do you fear it, but for its *Compulſion* and *Perſecution*? and will you *compel* or *perſecute* your ſelves, or chuſe ſuch as do? If you will, pray let me ſay, *You hate the Papiſts, but not Popery.* But God defend you from ſo doing, and direct you to do, as you would be done by: that chuſing ſuch as love *England*, her *People* and their *Civil Rights*, Foundations may be laid for that Security and Tranquillity, which the Children unborn may have cauſe to riſe up and bleſs your *Names* and *Memories* for. Take it in good part, I mean nothing but *Juſtice* and *Peace* to all; and ſo conclude my ſelf

Your Honeſt Monitor and England's *True Friend*

PHILANGLUS.

FINIS.